

# District Dialogue

**Representative Curtis Richardson**  
**Florida House of Representatives, District 8**  
**proudly serving parts of Leon and Gadsden Counties**

**2008**

## **Session priorities**

### **Focus kept on these key issues**

Rep. Richardson gave priority to these issues in 2008:

► **Disability History/ Awareness:**

This bill requires that a district school board designate the first two weeks in October each year as "Disability History and Awareness Weeks," during which a district school board may provide disability history and awareness instruction in all K-12 public schools. The measure passed and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

► **Social Worker Identification:** This consumer protection bill provides title protection for the profession of Social Work and makes it a misdemeanor offense for a person to fraudulently hold themselves out to the public as a social worker. The bill provided for exceptions. The bill passed and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

► **Motor Vehicle Warranty Association:** This bill requires motor vehicle manufacturers that sell warranties to continue to be licensed as service agreement companies. It amends Florida's warranty register law to require warranty associations that do not collect the names of warranty holders at the time the product is purchased to provide another method for warranty holders. The measure passed and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

► **Loggerhead Turtle Designation:**

The bill designates the Loggerhead Turtle as the official state salt water reptile. The designation was amended on to a measure designating the Florida Cracker Horse. The bill was signed into law by Governor Crist.



## **From the desk of Rep. Richardson**

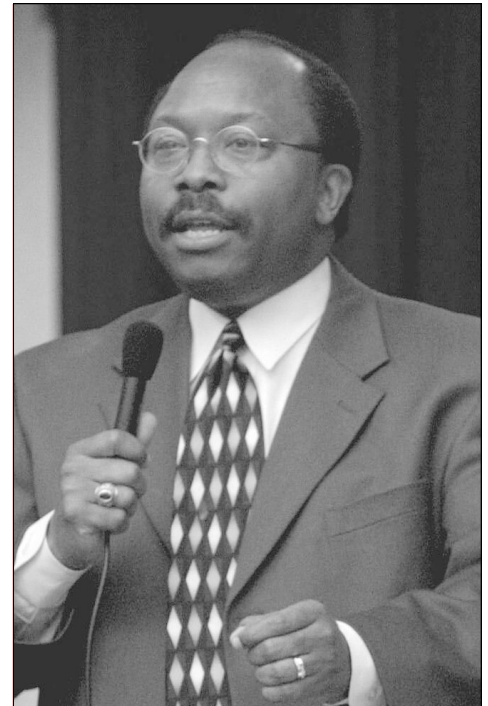
Dear friends and neighbors:

It was with mixed emotion that I approached my last legislative session. I have enjoyed serving as your voice in Florida government for the last eight years. This year's legislative session was one of the toughest ever.

Now that the session has ended, I wanted to take this opportunity to inform you about some of the major issues addressed. This session we faced a \$6 billion revenue shortfall for the current fiscal year which forced the legislature to reduce programs and services for the State.

We tackled many important issues, including minimizing the reliance on the FCAT in grading schools, providing healthcare to uninsured Floridians, and developing energy and climate change programs. I have also worked to ensure funding for projects key to our area.

It has been a pleasure to serve you in the legislature for the past eight years. Such an honor it has been to represent our community in the Florida House of Representatives!



**Rep. Richardson in floor debate during the 2008 session.**

## **Around the district**

Rep. Richardson makes it a priority to stay personally in touch with his constituents. Below is a list of his activities:

**January**

- New Urgent Care Center for Tallahassee Memorial Hospital Open House
- Ribbon cutting for Gadsden New Dental Clinic
- Gadsden Legislative Delegation Meeting
- Numerous events commemorating the legacy of the late Rev. Martin

Luther King Jr.

- AKA Centennial Celebration
- NWFL League of Cities Meeting/Dinner
- Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Annual Founder's Day Luncheon
- "Information on Politics, the Current Political System & How God's Word Applies to it all", Panelist
- Amendment 1 Community Meeting

*(Continued on page 2)*

## District

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- ▶ Higher Performing Students Celebration
- ▶ Able Trust National Mentoring Month Celebration
- ▶ Enterprise Florida Stakeholders Council

### February

- ▶ FAMU Black Infant Mortality Summit
- ▶ Black History Month Read-In
- ▶ Access Tallahassee Issues Forum
- ▶ American Heart Association Heart Ball
- ▶ Gadsden Healthy Start Gala & Award Ceremony
- ▶ Rotary Club of Tallahassee Daddy-Daughter Valentine's Dance
- ▶ Leon County Delegation Meeting
- ▶ CK Steele Scholarship Foundation Luncheon
- ▶ African Caribbean Dance Theatre Event
- ▶ Unity in the Community Festival
- ▶ Women of Excellence, Black History Program

### March

- ▶ Capital Community Action Agency Masked Benefit Ball
- ▶ Gadsden County Roundtable Youth Discussion
- ▶ Women's History Month Recognition Committee Reception
- ▶ Boys & Girls Club Youth of the Year Luncheon
- ▶ Tallahassee St. Patrick's Day Parade
- ▶ Springtime Tallahassee Parade

### April

- ▶ Florida Heritage Month Award Ceremony
- ▶ 40th year observation of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Assassination
- ▶ WFSU Spring Pledge Drive
- ▶ March of Dimes Walk America
- ▶ United Way Book Fair
- ▶ Delta Days Education Forum
- ▶ Sawdust Park Groundbreaking Event
- ▶ FL State Primitive Baptist Convention
- ▶ National Minority Cancer Awareness Celebration, Speaker
- ▶ American Heart Association Reception

### May

- ▶ Fraternal Order of Police Memorial

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Education

For the first-time since the A+ education reforms were implemented almost 10 years ago, significant changes were made by the legislature. SB 1908 revises the high school grading formula and lessens the reliance on the FCAT scores. The bill also calls for the development of "Next Generation" standards of a world-class nature, DOE is required to develop assessments for high schools to evaluate readiness for college for selected 12th grade students. End of course exams can be used in lieu of the FCAT. Social Studies will

be added to the FCAT assessment. Bills were also passed that would allow single gender education, prohibit bullying and require virtual education to be offered. While public schools budgets were being drastically reduced, a bill expanding a school voucher program by \$30 million was passed. Rep. Richardson passionately debated against that proposal.

## Environment/ Energy Conservation

The Florida Forever land-buying program was extended for another ten years and received \$300 million in bonding authority to purchase environmentally sensitive lands. Provisions were included for purchases of commercial seafood and agricultural lands. Everglades restoration will be continued with a \$50 million infusion of cash. The gopher tortoise is set to become the official state tortoise and the loggerhead turtle will be

the state's designated salt water reptile. The latter designation came as a result of a class project by Mrs. Haley's 6th grade honors science class at Florida High. With the passage of HB 7135, the legislature and Gov. Crist have set Florida on track to address its long-term energy needs. Included in the bill are standards for construction of energy efficient public buildings, an issue championed by Rep. Richardson.

## State Employees

A time honored tradition in the House is to invite legislative staff into the House Chamber to recognize them and applaud their commitment and dedication to public service. Unfortunately, for the third year in the last five this action will not be accompanied by an across-the-board pay increase in further recognition of their service, despite spiraling increases in cost-of-living. Agency heads will have the discretion to offer perform-

ance bonuses to selected employees. Highway Patrol Officers will receive a six percent increase to prevent the exodus of troopers to other agencies. Employees will see no increase in insurance cost, but retirees will be asked to pay more for their coverage. A highlight of the session was the passage of HB 887, cosponsored by Rep. Richardson, restoring some of the job protections lost under Service First.

## 2008 –2009 Fiscal Year Budget

Florida's slumping economy and the resultant drop in state revenues dominated the 60 day session. The session began with a \$1.3 billion reduction and the decline continued into the '08-'09 FY budget. For the first time in the history of the state we have seen two consecutive years of declining revenue. Tough decisions were made about how to balance the budget. With an unwillingness to seek additional revenue, steep reductions in programs and services were made. For the first time we will see more public education

funding coming from local property taxes than state general revenue. Other budget cuts were made to higher education, healthcare and programs for the disabled and senior citizens. In all close to \$5 billion was trimmed from the budget. The only area to see an increase was corrections. I was disappointed that the legislature chose to cut funding for many important programs in order to balance the budget when other choices were available. College and University students will also be forced to pay more towards their education.

### Leon and Gadsden Counties Appropriations

The local delegation worked to secure funding in legislative spending for area projects. Some of the highlights of our efforts are included below. These requests were either sponsored or co-sponsored by Rep. Richardson:

#### Leon County

- ▶ **Advanced Wastewater Treatment Improvements:** ..... \$500,000
- ▶ **Adults with Disabilities Fund:**.....\$999,474
- ▶ **Center for Disaster Risk Policy:**.....\$250,000
- ▶ **Florida Energy System Consortium:**...\$8.75 million
- ▶ **Leon County Civic Center:**.....\$3 million
- ▶ **I-10 Corridor Freeway Management System:** .....\$5.2 million

#### Gadsden County

- ▶ **Rosedale Water Project:**..... \$550,000
- ▶ **Gretna Inflow/Infiltration Plant:**..... \$500,000
- ▶ **Havana North Water Main Loop:**.....\$100,000
- ▶ **Gadsden Wastewater Project:** .....\$700,000
- ▶ **Local Park projects:**.....\$675,995

#### Colleges and Universities

- ▶ **FAMU:**.....\$143 million
- ▶ **FSU:**.....\$396 million
- ▶ **TCC:**.....\$41 million

#### Statewide Projects

- ▶ **Home Weatherization:**.....\$6.3 million
- ▶ **Black Male College Explorers Program:**... \$403,297

## A closer look



**Curtis Richardson**

**State Representative**

**District 8**

**2008 Committee/  
Council  
Assignments**

- ▶ Jobs and Entrepreneurship Council, Democratic Ranking Member
- ▶ Policy and Budget Council
- ▶ Courts
- ▶ K-12 Education
- ▶ Collective Bargaining

#### Sponsored bills:

- ▶ **HB 23:** Education Facilities
- ▶ **HB 35:** Social Worker Identification
- ▶ **HB 91:** Disability History & Awareness
- ▶ **HB 499:** Public School Student Discipline
- ▶ **HB 1205:** Motor Vehicle Warranty Associations
- ▶ **HB 1287:** Transportation Disadvantaged
- ▶ **HB 1499:** District School Boards
- ▶ **HR 9045:** Community Action Agency Day
- ▶ **HR 9047:** FAMU Day
- ▶ **HR 9049:** Elder Carl Joseph
- ▶ **HR 9105:** Silver Slipper Day

## Healthcare

One of Governor Crist's top priorities, and a priority of my colleagues, was seeking to address the problem of the uninsured in Florida. SB 2534 passed the legislature nearly unanimously because it's the latest attempt to address the affordability crisis of health insurance. The Cover Florida plan will provide non-catastrophic coverage; offer preventive health services; including immunizations, annual health assessment, well woman and well-care services; preventive screening such as mammograms, cervical cancer screenings, and noninvasive colorectal or prostate screening; incentives for routine preventive care; office visits for the diagnosis and/or treatment of illness or injury; office surgery, including anesthesia, behavioral health services; durable medical equipment and prosthetics; and

diabetic supplies. The legislation passed this year has brought this issue to the forefront. With health insurance being such a complex issue, we must remain vigilant and watchful to ensure that covering Florida's uninsured remains a priority. Legislation passed as a first step for autism spectrum disorder coverage will require large-group insurers to offer \$36,000 worth of annual medical coverage for autism to children 18 and under, with a lifetime cap of \$200,000 worth of benefits. It only covers children with autism, and does not include mandatory coverage for children with other developmental disabilities. Although this legislation is a more limited approach than the original House proposal, it is a crucial step in providing help to families dealing with this health crisis.



## Representative Curtis Richardson

402 South Monroe Street

1001, The Capitol

Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Phone: (850) 488-1798

Fax: (850) 922-2096

Email: [Curtis.Richardson@myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:Curtis.Richardson@myfloridahouse.gov)

Legislative Assistant: Chicarla Williams Pye

Executive Secretary: Rachael Favors

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## Around the district

## Involving citizens

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### Service

- ▶ Delta Sigma Theta Political Educational Forum
- ▶ APD Public Employee Recognition Day Luncheon
- ▶ NAACP Freedom Fund Dinner
- ▶ NWFL League of Cities, Annual Summer Meeting
- ▶ Gretna Cinco De Mayo Celebration
- ▶ 35th Celebration Big Wheels Deliver Meals
- ▶ Kappa Alpha Psi Black & White Ball
- ▶ Sickie Cell Foundation Crescent Moon Gala
- ▶ Jazz for Justice
- ▶ Gadsden Health Council Meeting
- ▶ Leadership Tallahassee 25th Anniversary Annual Luncheon Meeting

### June

- ▶ Small Business Excellence Awards
- ▶ Cub Scout Day Camp Luncheon
- ▶ Small County Coalition Annual Business Meeting
- ▶ 10th Anniversary Family Café Conference
- ▶ FDP Legislative Roundup
- ▶ Department of Corrections Reentry Summit
- ▶ Rotary Club Appreciation Meeting

## Getting involved

Thanks goes to the following persons who served in the House upon my invitation during the 2008 session.

### Messenger:

|                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| Javario Bates  | Delonte Knight |
| Jasmine Holmes | Nandi Smith    |

### Pages:

|                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Marvalin Carter  | Jordan Kirkendoll |
| Christiaan Davis | Chris Perrigan    |
| Reign Hervey     |                   |

### Interns:

|              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| Ana Jimenez  | Maurice Slade |
| Briana Toole |               |

### Minister of the Day:

Elder Donald Sheppard  
Pastor Rosalind Tompkins-Whiteside